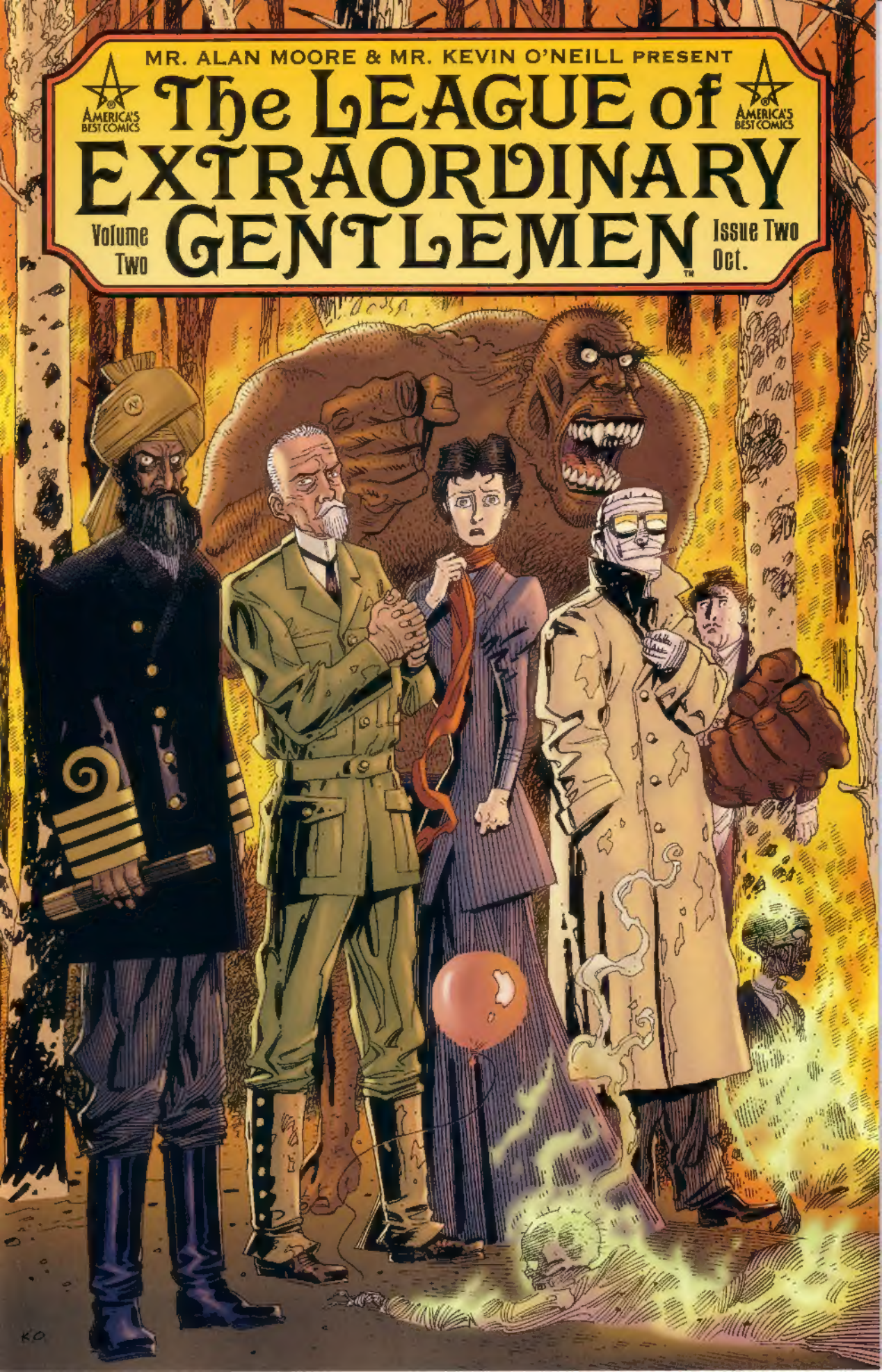
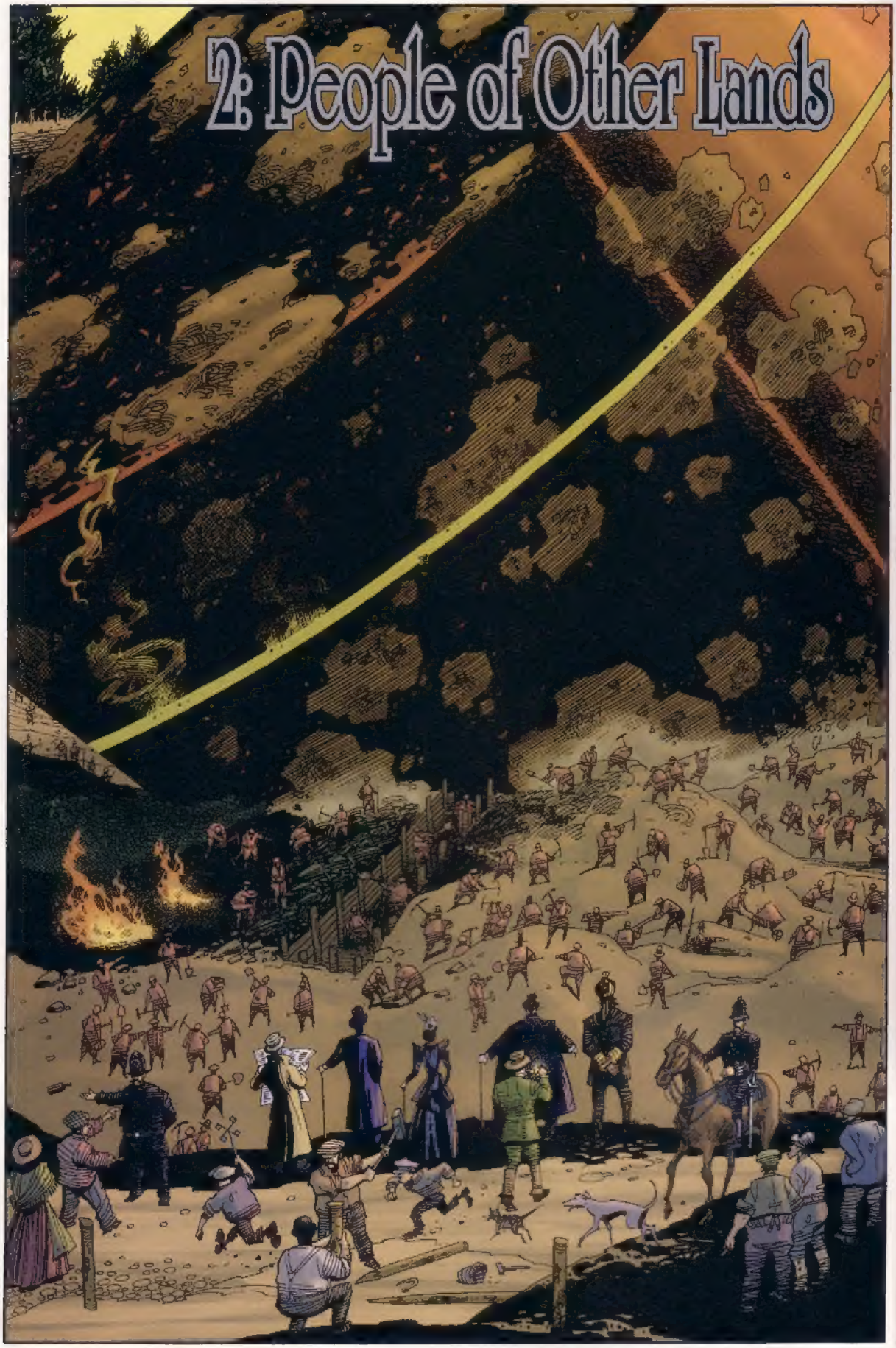
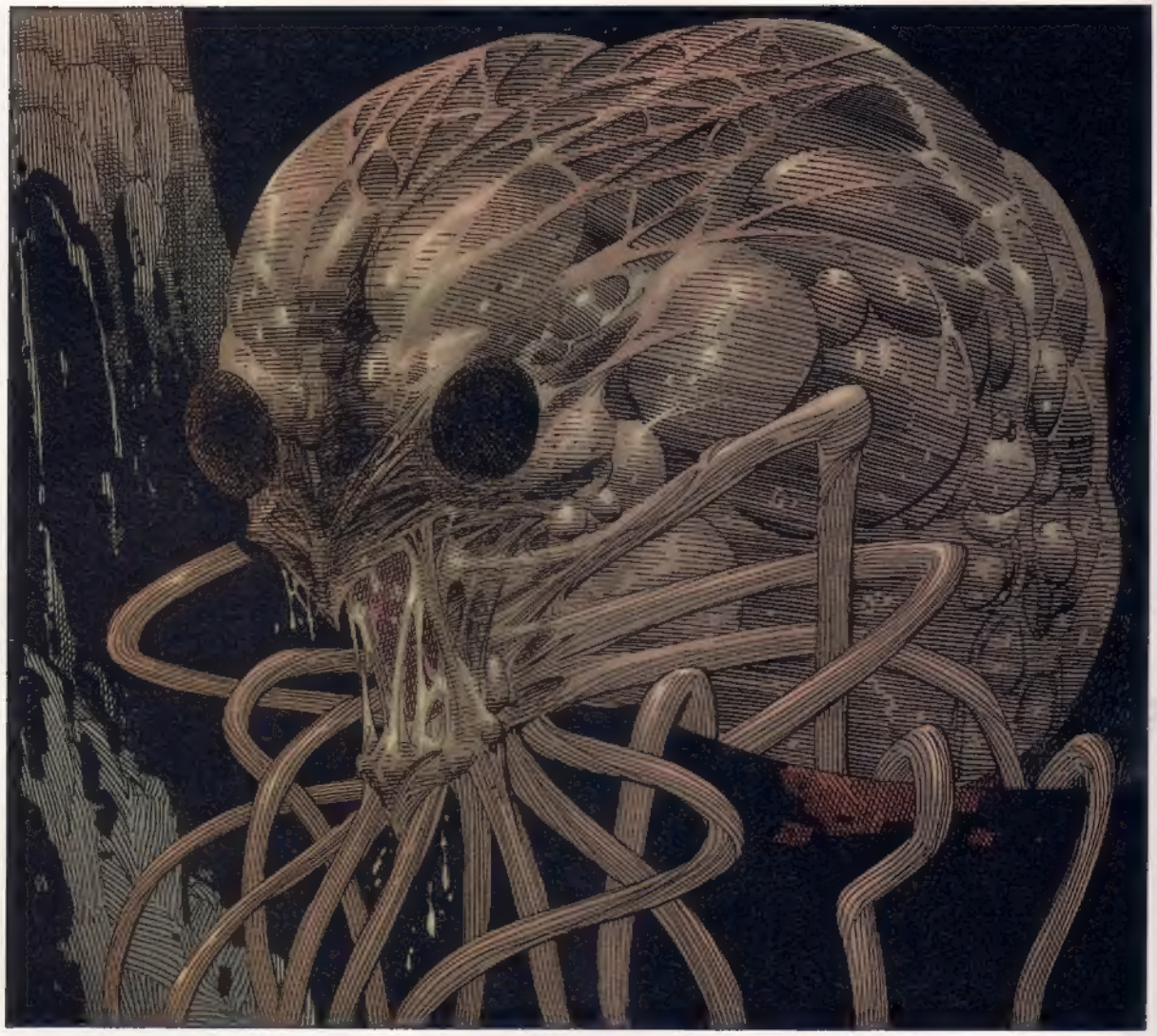

MR. ALAN MOORE & MR. KEVIN O'NEILL PRESENT
AMERICA'S BEST COMICS
The LEAGUE of EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN™
AMERICA'S BEST COMICS
Volume Two
Issue Two
Oct.
KO

MR. BOND?
AH. MISS MURRAY. GENTLEMEN.
BOND, IT'S TOO BAD YOU DIDN'T TOPPLE INTO THE SKY, WITH YOUR FORMER MASTER.
INDEED. AS FOR OUR NEW MASTER, WHERE IS HE, I WONDER?
TH-THE NEW M DOESN'T TRAVEL MUCH. HE SENT ME TO LIASE WITH YOU.
WHAT'S HAPPENING, EXACTLY?
NOBODY'S ENTIRELY SURE.
AN AIRBORNE OBJECT ARRIVED HERE EARLY THIS MORNING, AS DID WE. WE WONDERED IF IT MIGHT BE ANOTHER OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE'S SECRET PROJECTS?
I ASSURE YOU, WE'VE NOTHING LIKE THAT AT PRESENT.
PERHAPS THE FRENCH. OR THE PRUSSIANS...

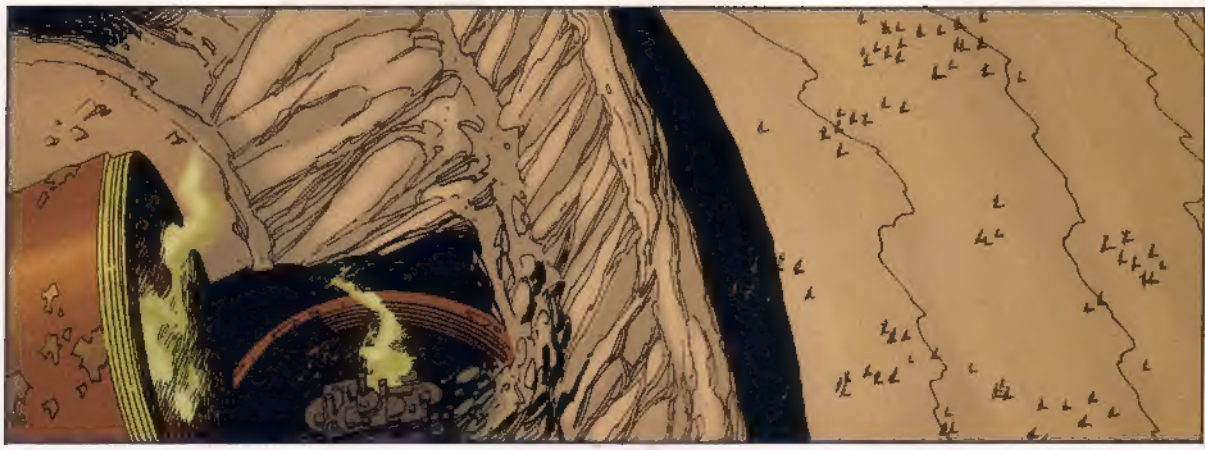

2: People of Other Lands

WHAT ARE THOSE LABOURERS DOING DOWN THERE? WHO GAVE THEM PERMISSION?
THEY'RE PERFORMING THE HUMANE TASK OF ASSISTING ANYONE... ENGLISH, FRENCH OR PRUSSIAN... WHO MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE IN THAT HULK.
I DON'T IMAGINE THEY FELT PERMISSION WAS NECESSARY.
S-SOMEONE SAID THAT STENT WAS HERE, THE ASTRONOMER ROYAL...
STENT'S A BABBLING LUNATIC. HE PROBABLY THINKS THIS PROVES HIS THEORIES OF LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS.
AND IS THE NOTION TRULY THAT INSANE?
YOU'VE SAID ENGLAND IS PLANNING A MOON-EXPEDITION...
WELL, YES, BUT WE'RE NOT EXPECTING TO FIND LIFE THERE!
LOOK UP THERE! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING...
BLIMEY...
KEEP BACK, YOU MEN!
AAA!
HE'S FALLEN IN THE PIT!
KEEP BACK.
KEEP BACK...
AAAAA!
OOH, GAWD...



WH...WHAT...?
MISS MURRAY, COME ON. LET'S GET BACK AWAY FROM THE PIT...

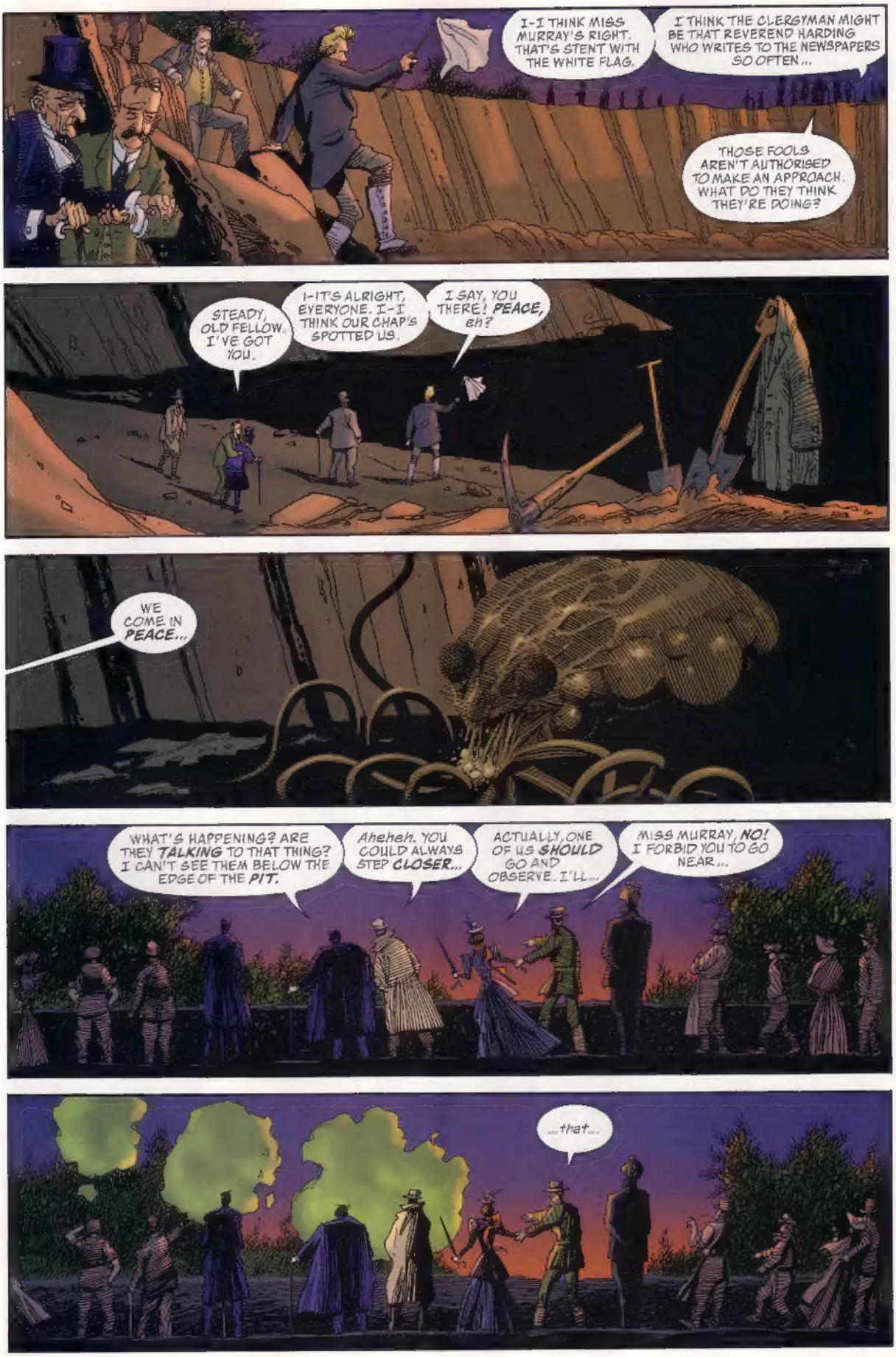
:ummmf:
:uhhff:
Aah.

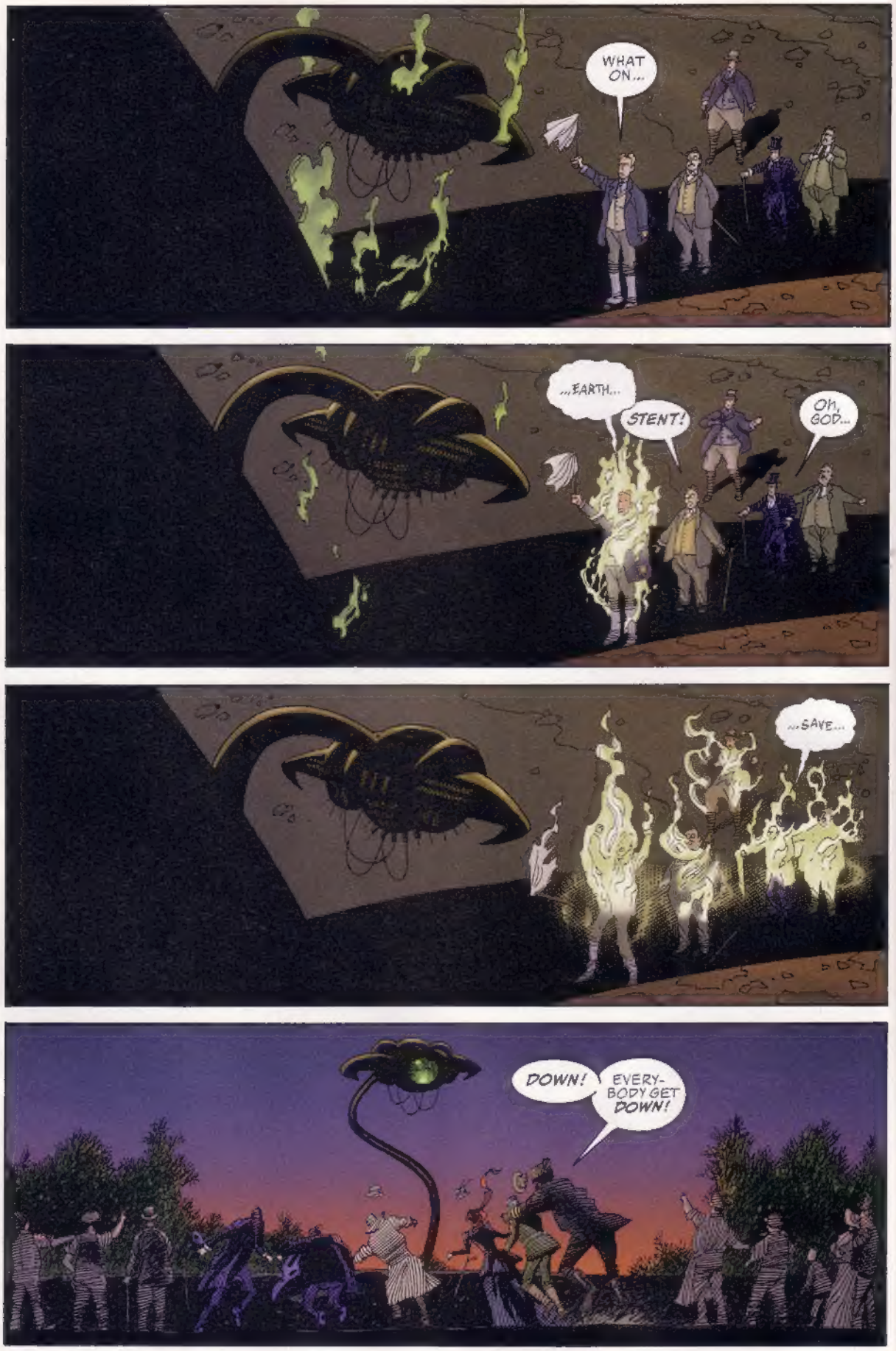


MR. QUATERMAIN, SURELY WE'RE FAR ENOUGH FROM THE HOLE BY NOW...?
BUT IT... WE DON'T KNOW. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT CAN DO. IF...
CONTROL YOURSELF, MAN! SHE'S RIGHT: WHATEVER BREED OF DEVIL THAT WAS, IT COULD BARELY MOVE.

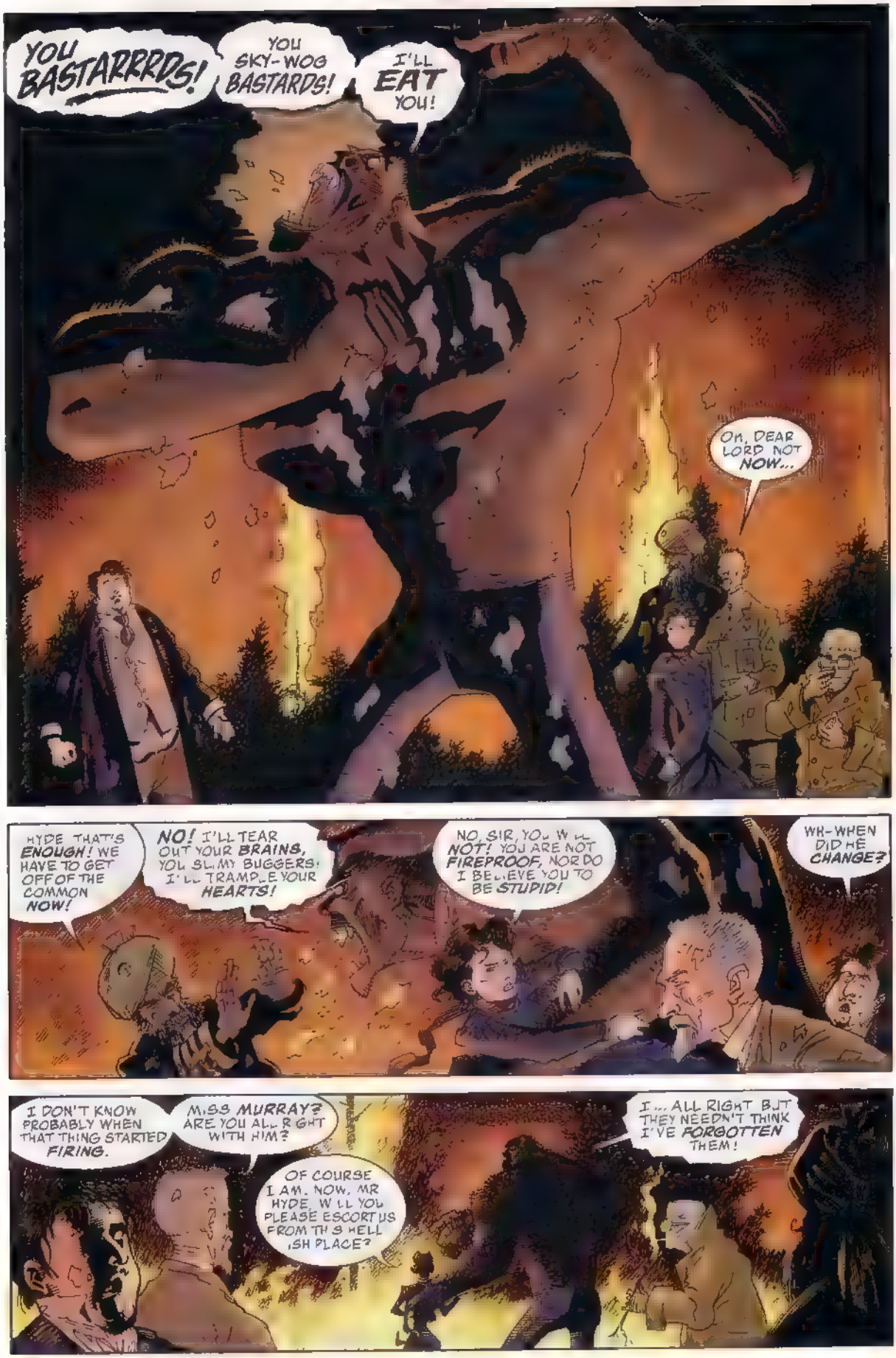
Y-YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M SORRY. GOT IN A BIT OF A FUNK.
I-IT JUST REMINDED ME OF THIS... THIS DREAM I ONCE HAD...
What ugly BRUTES! Good God, what ugly brutes!
LIFE FROM OTHER WORLDS, eh, BOND? EARLIER, SOMEONE MENTIONED THOSE MARTIAN VOLCANOES...

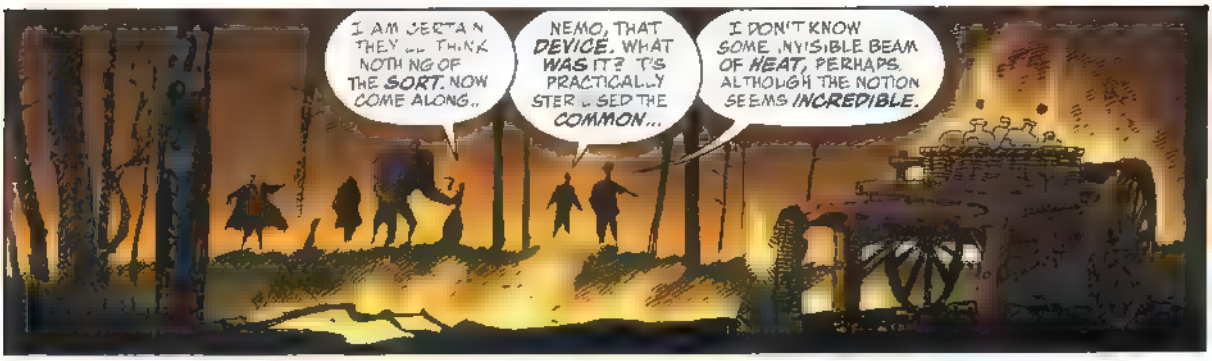
TH-THAT'S JUST COINCIDENCE.
YOU SAID YOURSELF, THIS CROWD'S BEEN GATHERING ALL DAY. OBVIOUSLY, WILD RUMOURS WILL START CIRCULATING...
SOMEONE'S TAKING IT SERIOUSLY. ISN'T THAT THE ASTRONOMER ROYAL, THAT STENT FELLOW?
D-DID YOU SEE A MAN IN THE PIT? THAT CHAP THAT FELL...


I-I THINK MISS MURRAY'S RIGHT. THAT'S STENT WITH THE WHITE FLAG.
I THINK THE CLERGYMAN MIGHT BE THAT REVEREND HARDING WHO WRITES TO THE NEWSPAPERS SO OFTEN...
THOSE FOOLS AREN'T AUTHORISED TO MAKE AN APPROACH. WHAT DO THEY THINK THEY'RE DOING?
STEADY, OLD FELLOW. I'VE GOT YOU.
I-IT'S ALRIGHT, EVERYONE. I-I THINK OUR CHAP'S SPOTTED US.
I SAY, YOU THERE! PEACE, eh?
WE COME IN PEACE...
WHAT'S HAPPENING? ARE THEY TALKING TO THAT THING? I CAN'T SEE THEM BELOW THE EDGE OF THE PIT.
Aheheh. YOU COULD ALWAYS STEP CLOSER...
ACTUALLY, ONE OF US SHOULD GO AND OBSERVE. I'LL...
MISS MURRAY, NO! I FORBID YOU TO GO NEAR...
...that...

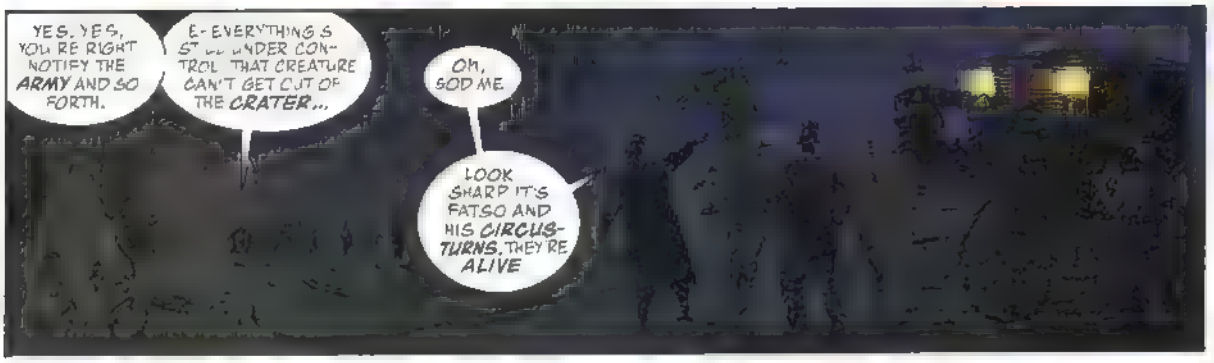

WHAT ON...
...EARTH...
STENT!
OH, GOD...
...SAVE...
DOWN!
EVERY-BODY GET DOWN!

;AHEGH;
HEGH HEGH HEGHH
WHAT, ?
;AHEGHH;

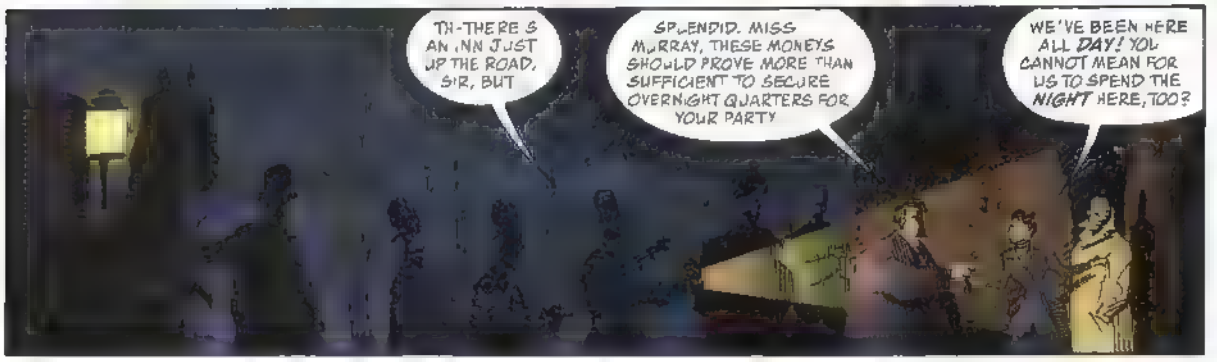

YOU BASTARRRDS!
YOU SKY-WOG BASTARDS!
I'LL EAT YOU!
OH, DEAR LORD NOT NOW...
HYDE THAT'S ENOUGH! WE HAVE TO GET OFF OF THE COMMON NOW!
NO! I'LL TEAR OUT YOUR BRAINS, YOU SLIMY BUGGERS! I'LL TRAMPLE YOUR HEARTS!
NO, SIR, YOU WILL NOT! YOU ARE NOT FIREPROOF, NOR DO I BELIEVE YOU TO BE STUPID!
WH-WHEN DID HE CHANGE?
I DON'T KNOW PROBABLY WHEN THAT THING STARTED FIRING.
MISS MURRAY? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT WITH HIM?
OF COURSE I AM. NOW, MR HYDE, WILL YOU PLEASE ESCORT US FROM THIS HELLISH PLACE?
I... ALL RIGHT BUT THEY NEEDN'T THINK I'VE FORGOTTEN THEM!


I AM CERTAIN THEY'LL THINK NOTHING OF THE SORT. NOW COME ALONG..
NEMO, THAT DEVICE. WHAT WAS IT? IT'S PRACTICALLY STERILISED THE COMMON...
I DON'T KNOW SOME INVISIBLE BEAM OF HEAT, PERHAPS, ALTHOUGH THE NOTION SEEMS INCREDIBLE.

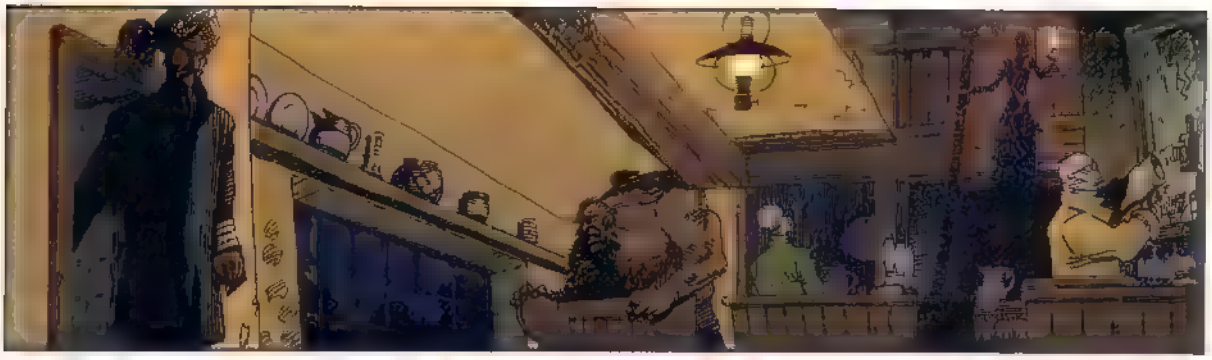
IT'S ALL INCREDIBLE. I CAN HARDLY TAKE IT IN.
IF THAT THING'S TRULY FROM ANOTHER WORLD, THEN...
SIR, IT HARDLY APPEARED PRUSSIAN.
IT IS MY BELIEF THAT WE MUST ASSUME THE WORST AND PLAN ACCORDINGLY

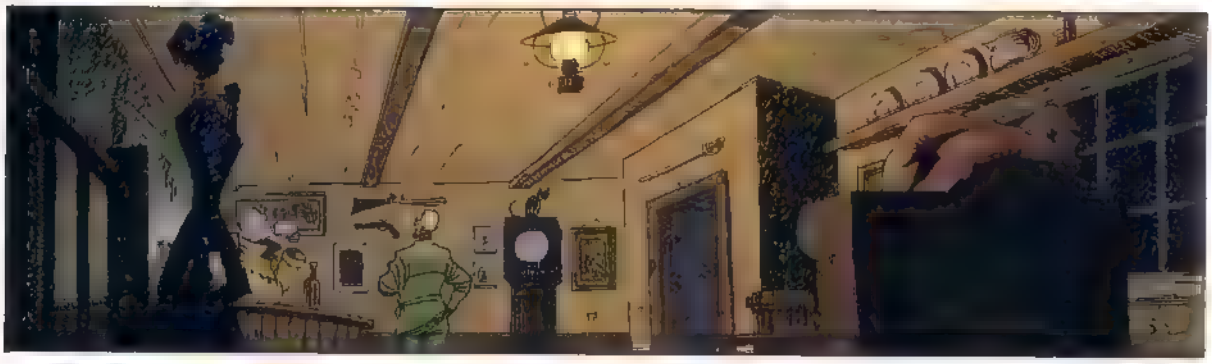

YES. YES, YOU'RE RIGHT NOTIFY THE ARMY AND SO FORTH.
E-EVERYTHING'S STILL UNDER CONTROL THAT CREATURE CAN'T GET OUT OF THE CRATER...
OH, GOD ME.
LOOK SHARP IT'S FATSO AND HIS CIRCUS-TURNS. THEY'RE ALIVE

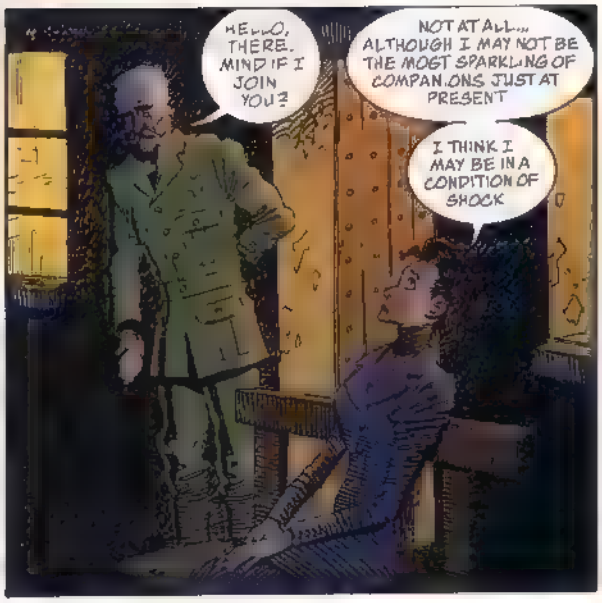
MR. BOND SIR? WHAT HAPPENED ON THE COMMON? WE SAW THE GREEN LIGHTS AND THE FIRES...
EVERYONE'S DEAD. WHATEVER'S IN THE PIT IS HOSTILE.
I SHALL REQUIRE A CARRIAGE BACK TO THE CITY FOR MYSELF AND NEARBY LODGINGS FOR MY ASSOCIATES.


TH-THERE'S AN INN JUST UP THE ROAD, SIR, BUT
SPLENDID. MISS MURRAY, THESE MONEYS SHOULD PROVE MORE THAN SUFFICIENT TO SECURE OVERNIGHT QUARTERS FOR YOUR PARTY
WE'VE BEEN HERE ALL DAY! YOU CANNOT MEAN FOR US TO SPEND THE NIGHT HERE, TOO?

I'LL NEED YOU TO WATCH THE COMMON'S PERIMETER UNTIL I CAN GET THE ARMY OUT HERE AND IN POSITION.
GREAT GOD WHAT A MESS, EH? WHAT A MESS.
G-GOOD LUCK TO YOU ALL
GYAA!
YAAARR!
Hmmph. A VILE JELLY IF EVER I SAW ONE
WELL, I EXPECT WE'D BEST FIND THE INN THAT THE CONSTABLE MENTIONED AND MAKE OURSELVES COMFORTABLE.
IT MIGHT BE PREFERABLE IF ANY TALKING OR NEGOTIATIONS WERE LEFT TO ME
THEY SAY WE CAN DO WHATEVER WE LIKE WITH THE PLACE
HAVING HEARD ABOUT THE UPROAR ON THE COMMON, THEY WERE JUST ABOUT TO LEAVE ANYWAY.
I SUPPOSE WE MIGHT AS WELL GO INSIDE AND CHOOSE OUR ROOMS.



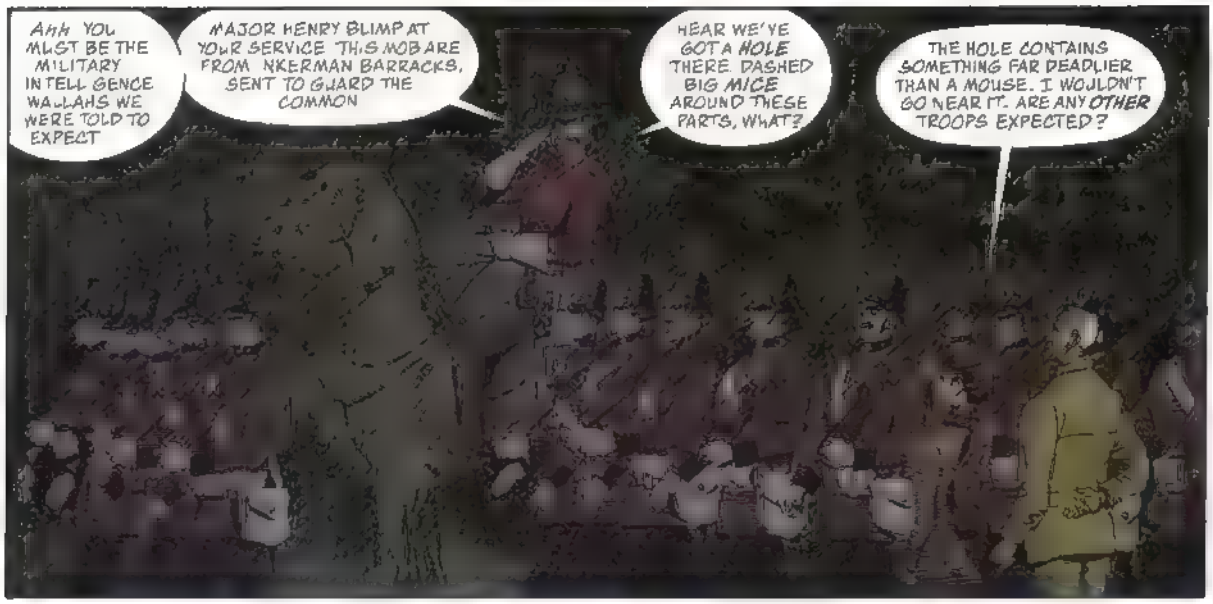



HE..O, THERE. MIND IF I JOIN YOU?
NOT AT ALL... ALTHOUGH I MAY NOT BE THE MOST SPARKLING OF COMPAN.ONS JUST AT PRESENT
I THINK I MAY BE IN A CONDITION OF SHOCK

TO BE HONEST, I THINK WE ALL ARE. UP IN MY ROOM A MOMENT AGO, I STARTED SHAKING L KE A LEAF
ALL THIS... IT'S UN-BELIEVABLE, ISN'T IT?
YES I WAS JUST LOOK NG AT THE SKY..

IT JUST STRUCK ME THAT ,,WELL, THAT IT WON'T EVER BE THE SAME, AFTER THIS. IT CAN'T BE
I A..WAYS THOUGHT OF IT AS SOMETHING THAT SHELTERED HJMANITY, BUT NOW IT FR GHTENS ME, MR. QUATERMAIN
IT FRIGHTENS ME

YES. IT'S L KE I SA D, TH S WHOLE AFFAIR REM NDS ME OF A DREAM I ONCE HAD. I THINK YOU WERE IN IT, TOO. IT...
HELLO.
WHAT S ALL THIS, COMING FROM HORSELL?


AHH YOU MUST BE THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE WALLAHS WE WERE TOLD TO EXPECT
MAJOR HENRY BLIMP AT YOUR SERVICE THIS MOB ARE FROM NKERMAN BARRACKS, SENT TO GUARD THE COMMON
HEAR WE'VE GOT A HOLE THERE. DASHED BIG MICE AROUND THESE PARTS, WHAT?
THE HOLE CONTAINS SOMETHING FAR DEADLIER THAN A MOUSE. I WOULDN'T GO NEAR IT. ARE ANY OTHER TROOPS EXPECTED?

I SHOULD SAY SO THERE'S A COMPANY MARCHING UP THROUGH CHOBHAM, TO COVER THE COMMON'S NORTH EDGE
ALSO, I GATHER THAT ABOUT NOW, THE CARDIFF REGIMENT ARE SETTING OUT FROM ALDERSHOT
THEY'LL HAVE MAXIM GUNS

I SEE
WELL, CARRY ON, MAJOR I HOPE YOUR RESOURCES ARE SUFFICIENT TO THE TASK, FOR YOUR SAKE
FOR ALL OUR SAKES
DON'T YOU FRET, MA'AM. IT'LL ALL BE OVER COME MONDAY MORNING. CHEERIO!

I HAVE A TERRIBLE FEELING. THOSE MEN...
MOST OF THEM ARE GOING TO DIE, AREN'T THEY?
LET'S GO BACK INSIDE. IT'S TURNING RATHER CHILLY FOR THE TIME OF YEAR, DON'T YOU THINK?

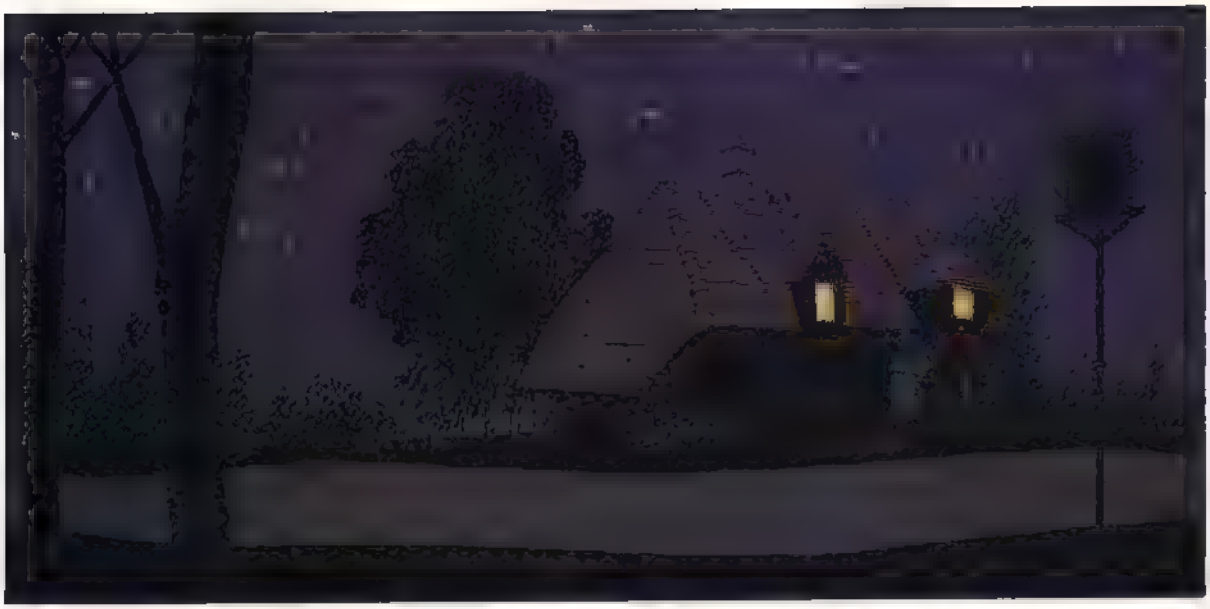
SNOT WITH ARMS. THAT'S WHAT THEY LOOKED LIKE.
ALL THAT BLOGGERING NO SE AND CLANGING FROM THE COMMON. IF I LISTEN TO MUCH MORE, I SHALL CRIPPLE SOMETHING
I THOUGHT THAT RACKET WAS THE ARMY PREPARING?

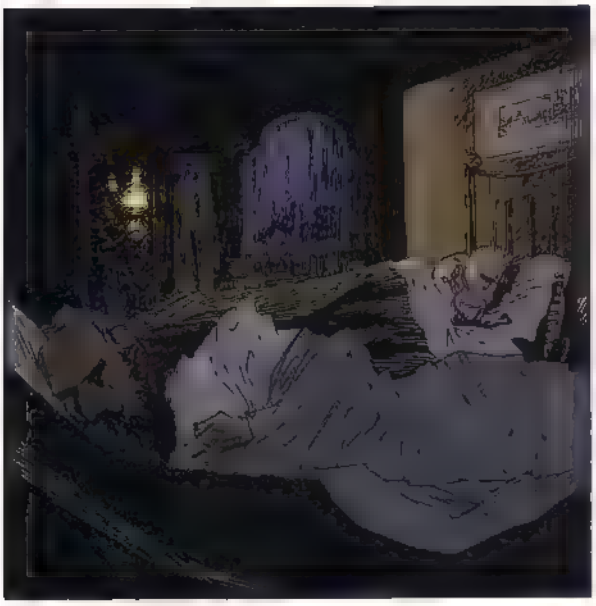
Hurm AN ARMY, PERHAPS BUT NOT OURS
ENGLAND HAS NO DEVICE THAT SOUNDS LIKE THAT WHILE UNDER CONSTRUCTION
EVEN I HAVE NOTH NG THAT SOUNDS LIKE THAT
DO YOU SUPPOSE THE CREATURE IS BUILDING SOMETHING?

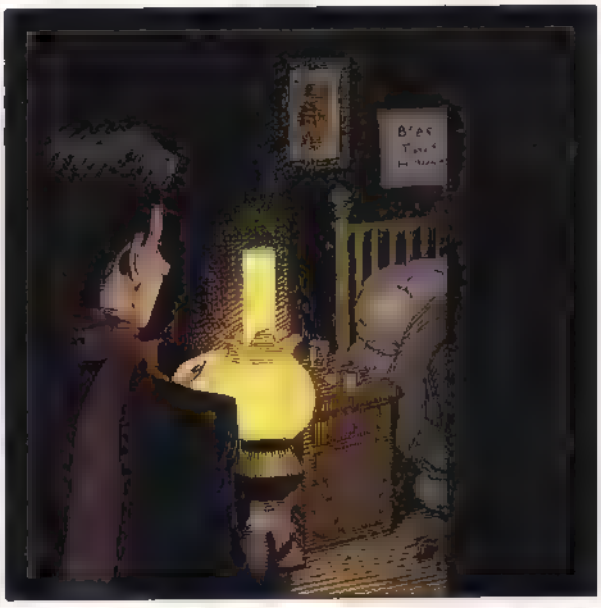
I WOULD THINK THAT VERY LIKELY. IN ITS POSITION, I WOULD NO DOUBT BE ASSEMBLING SOME MEANS OF LEAVING THE CRATER. IF IT...
GREAT CHRIST AND ALL HIS ANGELS..

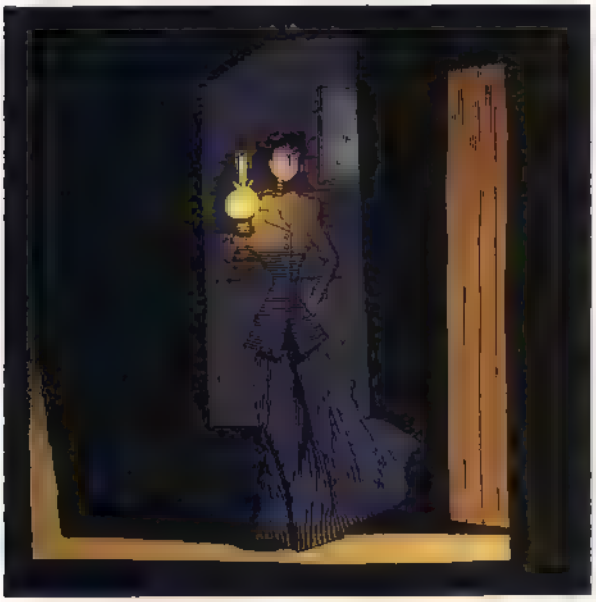
GRIFFIN? WHAT IS IT?
Ahemem
I REALLY COULDN'T SAY
YOU D ALL BEST COME AND LOOK

...IS THAT ?
POUND TO A PENNY IT'S ANOTHER CYLINDER LOOKS LIKE IT'S FALLING TOWARDS WOKING OR SOMEWHERE
Hunh. LONG WAY TO COME JUST TO CONQUER WOKING.
I FEAR, MR HYDE, THAT SHOULD ANY MORE OF THESE TIN CANS TOPPLE FROM THE SKY...
...THEN WE MAY ALL FIND OURSELVES ON THE LOSING SIDE

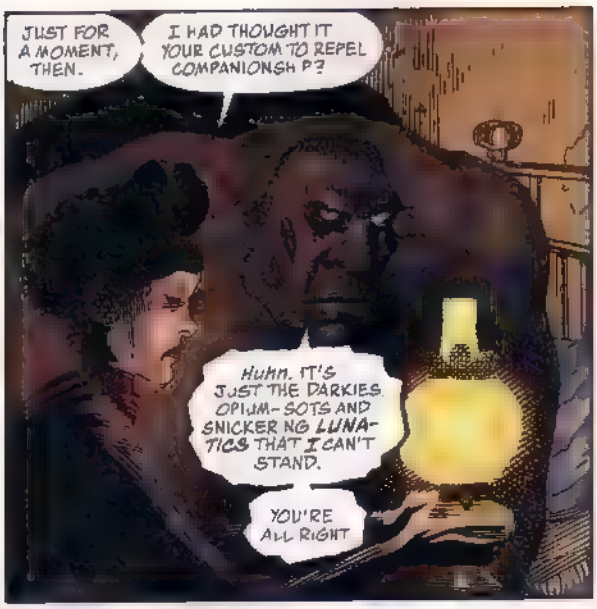








I KNOW YOU RE THERE. I CAN SME... YOU. COULDN T SLEEP EITHER, EHH?
YOU MIGHT AS WELL COME N
I'M NOT DO NG ANYTHING N PARTICULAR


JUST FOR A MOMENT, THEN.
I HAD THOUGHT IT YOUR CUSTOM TO REPEL COMPANIONSHIP?
HUHH. IT'S JUST THE DARKIES, OPIUM-SOTS AND SNICKERING LUNATICS THAT I CAN'T STAND.
YOU'RE ALL RIGHT

I FEAR THAT YOU ARE SOMEWHAT HARSH ABOUT OUR FELLOWS, MR. HYDE.
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK ME ANY BETTER?
CALL ME EDWARD
I DON'T KNOW FRANKLY, IT CONFUSES ME AND MAKES ME FURIOUS WITH YOU

SOMETIMES I THINK I SHOULD JUST RAPE YOU AND BEHEAD YOU
BUT A VOICE IN ME STILL FIERCER THAN MY OWN TELLS ME IF I DID THAT, I MUST NEXT TAKE MY LIFE.
IT'S PUZZLING.

PERHAPS IT IS THAT I WOULD THEN HAVE KILLED THE ONLY LIVING THING THAT DID NOT FEAR ME. D'YOU THINK THAT'S IT?
Y-YOU WOULD BE QUITE MISTAKEN, SIR.
I FEAR YOU VERY MUCH

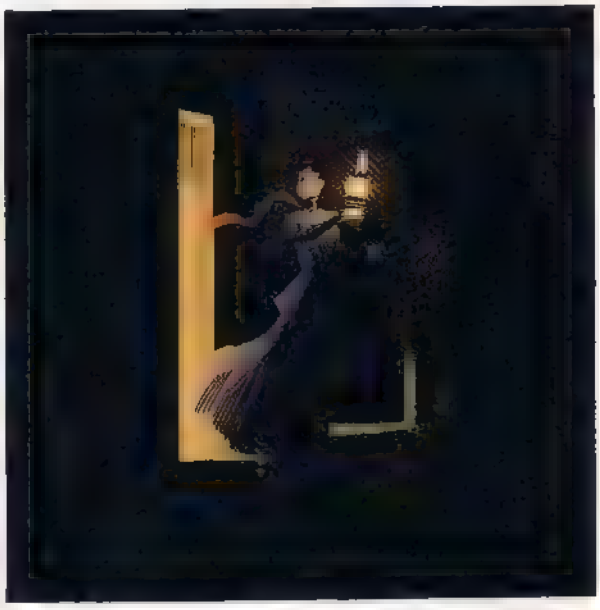
PERHAPS, PERHAPS YOU DO. BUT NOT LIKE ALL THE OTHERS
I BELIEVE YOU DO NOT HATE ME
I BELIEVE YOU HAVE PERHAPS MET SOMEONE WORSE THAN ME
WOULD THAT BE RIGHT?

YES

I THOUGHT AS MUCH.
MISS MURRAY, THOUGH I AM A BEAST, DO NOT THINK THAT I AM STUPID.
I KNOW THAT I AM HIDEOUS AND HATEFUL. I AM NOT LOVED, NOR EVER HOPE TO BE

NOR AM I FOOL ENOUGH TO THINK THAT WHAT I FEEL FOR YOU IS LOVE
BUT IN THIS WORLD, ALONE, I DO NOT HATE YOU
... AND ALONE IN THIS WORLD, YOU DO NOT HATE ME

I...
I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU LEFT ME NOW
GO QUICKLY, WOMAN GO BEFORE I BREAK YOUR JAW



Shit.

Aheheh
GOOD EVENING
uuuuuuu...
THERE, NOW, DON'T GET UPSET.
I'M GOING TO DRAW YOU A PICTURE
THERE. SOMETHING EVEN LUMPS OF AFTERBIRTH LIKE YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND
SEE? THERE'S THE SUN, THEN MERCURY, VENUS, EARTH AND MARS.
OUT OF EARTH COME US CHAPS
OUT OF MARS COME YOU CHAPS

NOW, HERE'S ME.
I'M ONE OF US CHAPS.
BUT YOU CAN'T SEE ME
Aheheh
NOW, HERE'S WHAT I THINK: YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE MANKIND A GOOD DUSTING DOWN.
AND YOU'RE GOING TO WIN.
Aheheh. WITH ME SO FAR?
YOU'RE GOING TO RULE THE EARTH.
LOOK! I'VE DRAWN A LITTLE AFTERBIRTH ABOVE THE EARTH, RULING IT
YOU SEE?
JUST THERE
NEXT TO ME.
YOU'RE GOING TO RULE THE EARTH NEXT TO ME.
Ah, youthful reader! Would that thine eyes were plucked from out thy heads are they were witness to such treachery! Be sure to purchase our next number, where we guarantee are horrors more appalling still!

Chapter Two

Europe: From Aiolio to Zenda

The Imaginary Isle

In this installment of our guide for today's traveller, culled from the annals of our centuries-old league, we look at continental Europe, with its remote kingdoms, frequently unnerving customs, and its many sites of interest. Starting in the southwest, we refer to journal notes by Wilhelmina Murray, written on her travels undertaken at the 19th century's end. Africa-bound down the west coasts of Spain and Portugal, Miss Murray noted the variety of coastal islands passed en route

"Tuesday. Landed in Philomela's kingdom, half a small island west of La Coruna on Spain's coast. King Philoponus gave this doleful kingdom to his daughter Philomela. When her funds ran out, she took to murdering and robbing guests, with some escaping to the nearby realm of Philoponus via a bridge protected by a stone colossus. This long-fallen statue's feet, on crumbling plinths of brick beside the bridge-mouth, are still visible. Crossing the bridge we visited the fort of Philoponus, where were lovely vases made from a peculiar soft glass, and also what remains of a perpetual motion engine, with its tiny dancing figures turned to shapeless lumps across the centuries. Predictably, its motion had turned out to be less than perpetual.

"Wednesday. We passed by the Capa Blanca Isles, where bullfighting occurs, a beastly sport which some animal-lover really should persuade them to abandon. Further south was Mayda, Island of the Seven Cities, just northeast of the Azores. The isle's seven cathedrals sounded fasci nating; but we didn't call there, nor upon Nut Island, though we saw that island's fishermen, Nutanauts as they're called, in their nutshell canoes. These are remarkable, carved out of single shells up to fifteen feet long. I waved, but nobody waved back. East lay the coast of Coromandel, a small independent country on the edge of Portugal, where was raised the castle of a locally famed nobleman, the Yonghi-Bonghi of Bo. I know one shouldn't laugh at foreigners and the preposterous names they give themselves, but, honestly, I ask you."

Various though the islands dotting Spain and Portugal's west coast appear to be, their strangeness pales beside that of the isles just east of Spain, in the Mediterranean. The Milanese magus Duke Prospero described these in his log while sailing for Gibraltar's straits in 1625

"We found an Isle called Lanternland by some, where great Demosthenes burned midnight oil, and putting in to shore at my command upon its soil saw men to glow worms turned: each Lord and Lady dressed with glass and gem that caught the shine of wanton candle-flame. Jewelled crest and diamond hem, blazing they pass, no two the same, their radiance near divine.

"Not far away an oracle is found; a bottle in a crypt upon an isle where did sweet Bacchus make a vineyard grow. The bottle speaketh with a cracking sound, and I did like its augurs not at all. We sailed south, past the Lotus-Eater's land of yellow sand and endless afternoon. A fellow there his care will soon forget in fragrant blooms, where hides worse slavery yet. Ogygia too we passed and left behind, where fair Calypso walked in violet meads, and so we came to find instead a place, a curious atoll by an island near. This ring-shaped land, that is called only 'Her,' surrounds a calm, clear pool, where fountains rise whose waters do not fall (which would disturb the silvered mirror still), but are instead upon the air there spread into a disc, twin of the lake below, each one reflected in the other's glass. Between them sits a lone white silent swan, that seldom moves but sometimes lifts its wings.

"The atoll's king, we were surprised to learn, a Cyclops is, one of that fearsome breed whereof Odysseus spake though sweeter far of disposition and inclined to treat the traveller with hospitality. His maids served us with sweets and the *pancire*, a native, justly-famed delicacy, while women danced provokingly, their skirts raised up like peacock tails thus to reveal their soft white under-things and curious shoes, strange Panic clogs, cleft at the sole and heel. The one-eyed regent wears about his head an iron contraption with two mirrors fixed before his eye, repelling natural light so that he can see nothing save that which be lighted by a purplish ray, its brightness of a colour that I may not name. Our host, he told us, to this kingdom came from the small island we had spied nearby which was, he said, the isle, the very same, where his ancestor and Odysseus met with such disastrous consequence and yet, we were assured, he harboured no ill will. Nevertheless, we made excuses soon, returning to our ship and sailing on, past the Imaginary Isle, so called, whereon are lovely forests and pearl-littered strands, soils rich with lapis lazuli and jade. Here singing mermaids live, white stags, pink deer, and unicorns, and other things beside. Men are forbidden, greyhounds rule as kings, and we passed on that could not there abide.

"Not far beyond we passed an isle as bleak as the Imaginary Isle seemed sweet and fair, a pois'nous land called the Great Garabagne where everywhere are monsters and despair. Next came we to Aiolio and saw its great bronze wall fired by the sunset's light, beyond where lived once the great King of Winds, Aiolos Hippotades who kept storms in ox skin sacks, and with his wife, six sons and his six daughters lived in luxury, also in incest, and impunity. We sailed on, through Gibraltar's yawning straits, with to our North the south most tip of Spain where is the mountain Animas raised up near Soria, where once Knights Templar walked. On All Saints night, 'tis said, a great wild hunt is raised amongst the restless dead, who ride the mountainside, that wolves might howl for dread, and chase a spectral maid with scarf of blue.

"Beyond the straits verdant Anostus lay, with its twin rivers, Pleasure called, and Grief. The trees beside these streams two fruits provide, and should a man but eat of one then all desire will flee. Age will reverse and he will at last as a blissful infant crawl. Eat of the other fruit and, it appears, man's life is passed in misery and tears."

Compared to their surrounding islands, Spain and Portugal possess few sites of interest. Portugal has the republic of Andorra, confused often with the country of that name located in the Pyrenees. The Portuguese Andorra is a godly place that nonetheless displays violent antipathy to foreigners, especially to Jews. More interestingly, in Spain's La Mancha province, is the landbound island, Barataria, where twenty years before Prospero's voyage a squire named Sancho Panza

ruled, albeit only for a week. Not far from Barataria we find a grotto, Montesinos' Cave, the sole account of which is that of Panza's master, Don Quixote, who Duke Prospero encountered in the early 1620s. The knight described the cave as having in it meadows where a crystal castle stood, enclosing the tomb of the hero Durandarte, enchanted by the sorcerer Merlin centuries before. As with many otherworldly kingdoms, Montesinos' Cave exists only sporadically, thus offering few opportunities for even the determined traveller, who should continue to the Pyrenees.

Within these mountains are a number of peculiar communities and ruins. Westward, hills enclose a desert valley where we find the willfully eccentric country Exopotomania, where the normal laws of physics obviously do not obtain. Sunrays are striped light and dark. A native yellow mollusc, if its shell is cracked, will leak a water droplet shaped like a transparent heart.

Further east is Andrographia, a bold social experiment in which each family is seen to be the state in microcosm. Nearby, perched on a rock above a precipice, we find the iron-clad castle of the 16th century sorcerer Atlante, thought to have been built by demons, with rusted walls that have a hellish glow if viewed by sunset.

Next comes a Pyrenean city that apparently cannot be named for reasons of what is puzzlingly described as "theological security." Its southern half contains a mansion, Triste-le-Roy, reached by committing murders at the three points of a mystic triangle, where travellers may learn the geometrically determined site of their own deaths. Continuing east, we pass the garrulous land of Auspasia to reach Bengodi, where presumably vast surpluses of produce have resulted in a mountain of grated parmesan cheese, the area smelling much like vomit as a consequence. However, there are also gemstones unique to Bengodi, including an invisibility-bestowing heliotrope used in the first experiments of Hawley Griffin.

Reaching the coast, close to the Balearic Islands is Trypheme, described by Marguerite Blakeney, visiting the country with her husband Percy and their fellow operative Miss Hill during the 18th century. "Trypheme is shameless, governed by but two decrees. Subjects must not disturb their neighbours, but may otherwise do anything that does not contravene rule one. Society thus governed seemingly allows for a content unspoiled by guilt, where citizens pursue, untroubled, their own pleasures. This thrills both Percy and dear Fanny, which is quite exhausting. As is customary with the women here, Fanny and I wear only silver sandals and a kerchief, making Percy positively scarlet with embarrassment."

North, within French territory, is Papafiguiera, the inhabitants of which are famously obese. One governor was said to be so fat that, seated, his rear covered several square feet. Near Papafiguiera on the northern Costa Brava are a host of tiny islands, mentioned by Duke Prospero while headed for Gibraltar. These include Ptyx, Bran Isle and Clerkship, Laceland, Leaveheaven alone and Breadlessday. Amorphous Island, made from viscous, protean coral and with trees like snail horns, lies north, while Ruach, the "Windy Island" whose inhabitants were cured of flatulence by special wind from Aiolio, lies south. In between are Cyril Island (a self-propelled volcano that is currently the home of

Captain Kidd), the Fortunate Islands (which include the Isle of Butterflies, the wings of which are large enough to cut sails from), and Fragrant Island (where statues depict the deity between two nymphs, proclaiming his commandments, "Be in Love" and "Be Mysterious"), along with the pie-island Pastemolle, Thermometer Island where the inhabitants have various forms of non-human genitalia, and a stupefying plethora of others.

Let us now examine the French mainland. Southeast of Marseilles we find the flower-carpeted peninsula of Flora, murderously beset by witches during early 1830, though these were successfully repelled. North is Lubec, a town in south Provence founded by colonists from Thermometer Island, with all the genital peculiarities so common in that place. Thus, in Lubec, male genitalia are removable, stored in the Town Hall and hired out only for producing servants. North of Lubec stand two extraordinary castles. Trinquelage is a stone medieval fortress that is sometimes haunted by a great assembly of spectral nobles, while to the west is Nameless Castle, where men speak a mix of truth and lies, and either sit but never stand or stand but never sit.

West of Provence are lands once belonging to the kingdom of Poictesme, guarded by the Fellows of the Silver Stallion. A like-named group exists in modern Nimes, built on Poictesme's ruins, but appears to be a lodge of local businessmen who have no notion of their order's antecedents. Further west, in what is now Auvergne, we have a medieval province that shared borders with Poictesme, known as Averoigne. Under these places there exists the subterranean Grande Euscarie, ruled by tool-using mammoths who took refuge there during the Ice Age, entering through caves in the Pyrenees. Some fossil centaurs have been found close to the underground land's outmost reaches, and it's thought that the cave-system might stretch to Fontainebleau near Paris, where the buried kingdoms of the Fatipuffs and Thunnifers are found

Returning to the surface, close to Bergerac we find Baron Hugh's Castle, visited by envoys from the Devil in the 15th century. One of these, falling in love with a mortal, was with his betrothed turned to a statue. Though the statues are today eroded beyond recognition, visitors pressing their ears close to the statues' breasts will still report the audible beat of the lovers' hearts inside their mantles of worn stone.

West of the Dordogne in the Bay of Biscay is the modest and agrarian republic Calejava, founded by one Dr. Ava in the 1600s upon communitarian ideals, described by Mina Murray in her journal notes as "scrupulously fair; screamingly dull." Beneath the Bay of Biscay is the sunken city Belesbat, not far off from Saint Vincent, opulent till nearby villagers learned that this wealth was gained by murdering wayfarers and put the city's occupants to sword. Soon after, storms arose, submerging Belesbat, in which state it remains. In the late 19th century further sunken ruins were unearthed nearby, perhaps a separate sunken city (named by its discoverers as, simply, "Disappeared") or perhaps a mere suburb of Belesbat itself. Other theories link both sites with the Atlantean colony, Atlanteja, off the coast of Brittany, or hold that these locations are all outposts of the Streaming Kingdom as discussed in our first chapter.

Also off Brittany we find another group of islands that were passed through by Miss Murray on her way to Africa. "Near Brittany we passed above Le Douar, a strange, inverted, sunken island capsized in the 13th century, with mountains at the island's rim forming a seal that

trapped an atmosphere beneath the upturned bowl. Le Douar's interior is still inhabited by people who've adapted to the sub-sea pressures, and sustain themselves on a unique variety of fungus. Also, they've tamed the power of Radium to light their otherwise dark ocean-bottom realm. Later, on our starboard bow we saw the Isle of Boredom, our captain's description of which I paid no attention to. Then, in the distance we saw Magic Maiden's Rock, where an enchantress born in Argos lured ships to their doom until a knight from Crete first won her heart then pushed her to her death, which sounds a rather rotten trick.

"Next day we passed Realism Island, where once stood a tower to honour God, with the world's animals, even the ugly ones, carved into its facade to represent the work of the divine Creator. Sadly, its designer suffered injuries to the head and could no longer recall why he'd built the thing, deciding that, in its appalling ugliness, it was a monument to Realism. Hence the island's name. We carried on past Cork (not Cork in Ireland, obviously) that Lucian described. The isle, now uninhabited, is made entirely out of cork, as were the feet of its unusual population, who as a result could walk on water, greatly aiding them with fishing and the like."

Nearby, on the mainland, are two former islands that have since attached themselves to the French coast. The first is Alca, where the native penguins were transformed to humans by the Angel Gabriel, though this legend may satirically refer to the plump, pear-shaped bodies of the island's close-bred population, or to their distinctive waddling gait. Near Alca is the former Isle of Asbefore, once part of an archipelago, with its fellow islands (Farapart, Jumptoit, Incognito) now seemingly sunken; Asbefore has known only one incident of interest, this being a successfully repelled invasion by a group of turkey hunters from the town of Bang-Bang-Turkey, which is close to Brest in Brittany. Also near Brest we find the mouth of the Atlantic tunnel linking Brittany with New York. Commenced quite recently in 1924, destroyed by sabotage in 1927, the tunnel will best be remembered for the chance discovery of Atlanteja, as discussed above, uncovered during the folly's construction.

Further inland is Broceliande forest where the oak believed by French historians to be the final resting place of Merlin is located. A hole in the trunk allows a glimpse into the dark interior where there indeed appears to be a pile of human bones. Next we reach Banoic, north of Rennes in what was western Gaul, ruled by King Ban, father of Launcelot. During the 18th century this area was subsumed in the Hurlubterean Empire, which collapsed in 1837 after the resumption of religious wars waged on an argument over the colour of the egg from which the Divine Bat was hatched. Nothing today remains of the great glory that was once Hurlubiere. Just southeast of Banoic is the River Loire. On its north bank, not far from Blois, is the proposed site of the city Morphiopolis, whose people will exist in ageless slumber during which their vital processes will be suspended. Doctor Morpho, who invented during 1920 the vitality-suspension drug that, it's alleged, will make this possible, is also the proponent of this strange time-capsule city scheme.

Upon the south bank of the Loire is the eight sided Abbey of Theleme, where the motto is "Do as you will" and where permission to grow rich and happy has replaced oaths of obedience, poverty and chastity The Abbey was founded in 1534 by the giant Gargantua, who, amongst other things, provided Paris with its name during the 16th century, when he discharged the contents of his massive bladder. The luckless citizens were washed away or drowned by a great flood of urine that poured steaming from the much relieved colossus, who, when he viewed the destruction his emission had provoked, could not contain his mirth. At this, those who'd survived the deluge angrily cried "Look! He's drowned us *par ris* (for a laugh)," with the unlucky city known as Paris ever after.

The museums of Paris contain many relics from much earlier times such as the Amran period, when France was Aquilonia and was ruled briefly by a Swedish warrior-king named Amra, though some suggest this was a nickname meaning "lion" or "lionheart." Relics also exist from earlier pre-Bronze-Age periods, dominated by the cruel Melnibonean empire, these remains including the corroded hilt of a black sword embossed with runes, perhaps Earth's earliest known written language.

Modern Paris also has its charms. Like most French cities, Paris has its own "Parthenion Town," bordello districts with permitted, regulated prostitution. This scheme, first adopted in the 18th century, has not been free of criticism but is agreed, even by Suffragettes like Wilhelmina Murray, to be far preferable to the alternative. Less graspable is Neverreachhereland, an achingly lovely landscape possibly connected with the metaphysical domains encountered in our own United Kingdom, that can't be visited but only fleetingly perceived in certain objects, such as infants' paintings, or one's own name in a childish hand carved on an ancient desk.

Beneath the city's Opera House exist the caves where in 1911 the deranged and hideous "Phantom" carried out his crimes. In 1913, Mina Murray and her second extraordinary league fought their French counterparts Les Hommes Mysterieux here, these being aeronaut Jean Robur, the frightening night sighted Nyctalope and several others. Murray calls the cave "a dismal place, that echoed still with grief and rage. I thought the Nyctalope would kill me there, just prior to A.J. shooting him, and can't imagine a more dreadful place to die." Through sewers under Paris (notable for their disputed "Jean Valjean" graffiti) we travel from the Paris Opera to the Graveyard of Unwritten Books, in chambers under the Hotel de Sens, where are those manuscripts that either were suppressed, unfinished, or else never started. Passageways connect these silent galleries with the underground region of the Fattipuffs and Thinnifers beneath Fontainebleau forest, lit by floating neon-filled balloons

Back on the surface, just outside of Paris lies Lofoten Cemetery, with its crows grown fat on human flesh and its reported spectres. Nearby there is Montmorency, where the scientist Martial Canterel maintains his villa, Locus Solus, with its many

wonderful inventions. Visitors must see the rain-prediction apparatus in the villa's gardens, and a huge flying beetle hung beneath, made from extracted human teeth.

Also near Paris is the city Fluorescente, built on avant-garde philosophies. Fruit is piled at every intersection, invisible dogs roam the streets, and nocturnal sounds are muffled by thin rubber sheets. Explaining Fluorescente, townsfolk usually quote the local motto: "Fluorescente is where a street singer puts darkness to a test of silence spread like a pool of red wine." Fluorescente bor ders Vincennes, east of Paris, under which is yet another subterranean site, this being the notorious Suicide City. This dismal refuge of the world's failed suicides was found during 1912 Police investigations of an underground rail line between Bastille and Vincennes, and was allegedly founded by survivors of London's notorious Suicide Club, disbanded 1882.

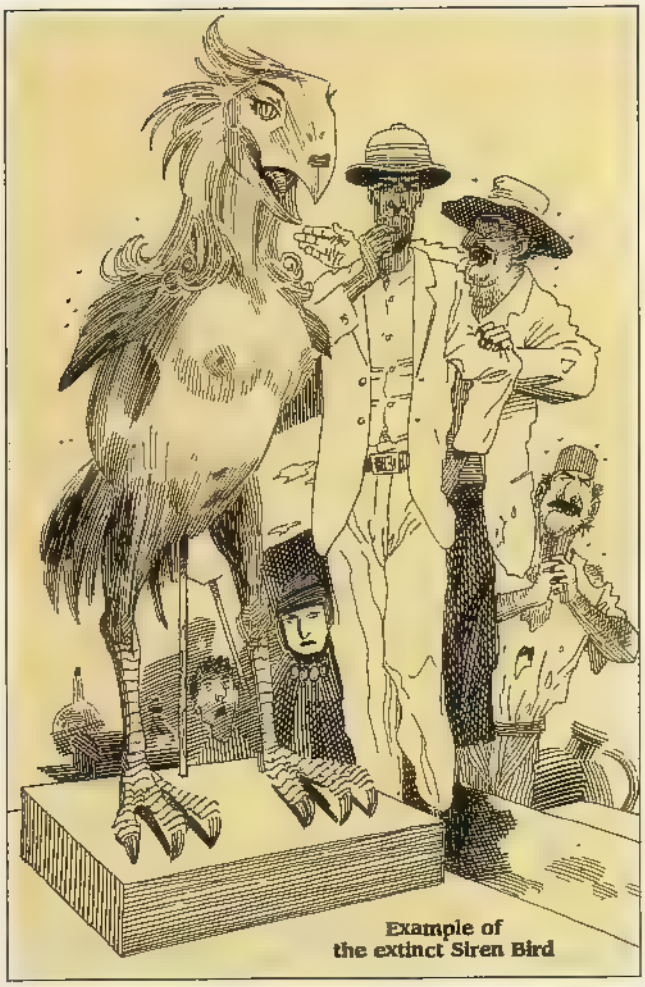
Moving from Paris to the coast we come to Etretat and Hollow Needle, cave-lair of Arsene Lupin. Amongst Les Hommes Mysterieux, encountered in 1913 by Mina Murray's reformed team, it is not certain if Lupin survived that episode. As with his rival Fantomas, remains were never found and both the master-thief and arch-fiend may have managed to escape. Further north is Quiquendone, on the Escaut in Flanders, where in 1870 a deranged engineer named Dr. Ox turned townsfolk into violent beasts with side effects from gas-lighting experiments. Dr. Ox, believed dead, was in fact admit ted to a nearby township, Expiation City, built for purposes of ethical atonement and said to have aided the rehabilitation of various master villains

Along the Belgian border are the forests of Ardennes, with their enchanted castles, four of which reared proud above the trees until 1913. North, the castle of the murderer Bluebeard stood, while further south was the retreat of the deformed French noble called "The Beast." Eastwards lie two demolished fortresses, one home to an inbred Royal family cursed by cataleptic fits, with lovely Princess Rosamund as the most famous sufferer. The other fort, Carabas Castle, had been previously called Ogre Castle until the ogre was provoked into transforming to a mouse and promptly eaten by a talking feline dressed in striking footwear. Near these ruins stands a broken fountain, picked clean of the gold and alabaster once adorning it, alleged to have been made by Merlin for the great knight Tristan. Called the Fountain of Love, with a nearby dried-up stream known as the River of Love, both sites were destroyed along with the four castles by the shellfire of the Great War.

Moving on to Greece, in the Aegean we find more peculiar islands. Xiros, furthest east, is a notoriously haunting land, its shape indelibly imprinted on the mind of even distant viewers, who cannot forget the island's talcum sands or crystal waters. A mysterious phenomenon called zahir is believed to manifest here, having various forms, including tigers, astrolabes, and Argentinean coins, none of which once seen can be forgotten, even in one's sleep. Westward, Devil's Island was ruled by the giant Bandaguido, with his daughter Bandaguida and their child, until the dynasty was overthrown in the 3rd century AD. Nearby is Abdera, famous for its devotion to the horse, despite the horse revolt in the 5th century BC, when Abdera's well-educated horses overthrew the city's government, butchering men and mules and scandalizing women until Hercules himself quelled the revolt. Lemuel Gulliver's margin notes conjecture that the banished intellectual horses of Abdera may have sired the Houyhnhnms, talking horses the much-travelled Gulliver had previously encountered.

On the east coast of Greece itself we find the ruins of the morbid city Ptolemais, bordered by the Charonian Canal, while over Phlegra are the floating remnants of the avian citadel Cloudcuckooland, founded by Pesithetaerus in 400 BC. Today a sorry, decomposing spectacle, Cloudcuckooland has sailed too high for birds to still inhabit, and cannot be seen without recourse to a strong telescopic lens. Westwards are still more islands. Aiaia, Circe's island, is amongst the most well-known, along with Scylla and Charybdis (now without their monstrous dwellers) and the Wandering Rocks, a group of now unmoving islands that were said once to have clashed together, as remarked on by the Captains Ulysses and Jason. Also popular is Siren Island, where are sold stuffed examples of the extinct Siren bird with its eerie approximation of a woman's face, developed over centuries to aid this flightless giant avian in attracting human prey. Not far off, the volcanic isle Pyrallis is the sole habitat outside Crete for dragonfly winged reptiles called pyroto cones, which feed on flame.

Below Mediter ranean waters we find the Arabian Tunnel leading to the Red Sea, its existence proved by Nemo, Sikh submariner, who released marked fish in the Gulf of Suez, these fish later turning up near Syria. The tunnel's length comes close to intersecting with another shaft, this being the Arcadian Tunnel linking Greece with Italy, once said to be the haunt of satyrs and reserved for bitterly unhappy lovers. On the Italian mainland at the tunnel's far end, we're near the Straits of Otranto and the castle of the same name, empty since the 18th century, when it was plagued by apparitions, which included a giant helmet covered with black plumage. Further north is Portiuncula, where people seek some quality or thing lost in their past, while under Italy we find Meloria Canal, employed in 1300 by privateer Luigi Gottardi of Genoa, using African slave labour, to facilitate an invasion of Venice. Across Italy rotted webs of string are found, complex and covering several acres, remnants of the mobile



Example of the extinct Siren Bird

town Ersilia, whose populace connect their homes with different-coloured threads to mark the various relationships of the inhabitants. When this net hinders everyday affairs the town moves on, established elsewhere, leaving only decomposing lace to mark the frag ile human bonds that once existed there.

In Torelore on Italy's west coast, men customarily entered confinement while their pregnant women were conscripted in the Torelorean army, with the country over-run during the 14th century as a result. Islands nearby include the one where Prospero, his daughter and his spirits dwelled in 1600.The wizard's hermitage still stands although its library of rare occult books has gone. Ennasin Island, close to Sicily, has red painted people whose distinctive noses look exactly like the ace of clubs, while nearby lie the industrious Island of the Busy Bees and the Island of the Day Before, its waters swarming with Beelzebub fish and two-headed eels.

Back on the mainland, in the Apennines we find the ruined Abbey of the Rose, burned down in 1327, and the ill-famed Castle of Udolpho, with its dark history. Should these grim sites depress the traveller, they should seek amusement in the hill-top town of Pocapaglia, so steeply situated that its poultry wear small hammocks underneath their tails, preventing eggs from rolling off downhill. With spirits lifted, they may then pass on to Switzerland, and prosperous Goldenthal, famed for its honey. Once a slum known only for its poverty and low-life, the village was transformed by moral reform to a rich (and smug) communitarian Utopia. In the Swiss Alps exists the snow-swept realm of King Astralgus and his alpine spirits, famed for rescuing lost travellers, while south upon the Austrian border is the Balbrigian and Bouloulabassian United Republic, kingdoms united when former scullery-boy King Gauwain poisoned the water-cistern and the entire population of Balbrigia.

Moving from Austria into Bavaria we find perhaps the smallest and most socially retarded country in the world, the Duchy of Grand Fenwick, founded in the 17th century by Sir Roger Fenwick, his insufferable Englishness preserved in both the Duchy's language and its customs. European commentators, while surprised by Grand Fenwick's continuing survival, feel the Duchy will hang on as long as it doesn't do anything ridiculous such as declaring war on the United States. Grand Fenwick should not be confused with the nearby Grand Duchy, famous for its feline prodigy, Murr Cat (a relative of the boot-wearing cat who ruled Carabas Castle in Ardennes). The local sport is mimicry, so skilled that in the 18th century a dwarf named Zaches passed himself off as a Minister called Zinnober. Zaches came from the alpine village Weng, a bleak place that can drive the unprepared insane. The dwarfish populace of Weng advise drinking and whoring as the remedy for this dementia.

More pleasant are the sites in west Bavaria visited by the Blakeneys and Miss Hill during the 1790s, as described by Marguerite Blakeney in her journal. "West of Munich lies delightful woodland where our coachman said a place known as 'The Wood Between the Worlds' was sometimes found if one possessed a certain ring made out of yellow dust. Nearby stood Runenberg, a mountain where lone travellers report encounters with a nearly-naked woman who gives them a precious casket which is gone when they awaken. Percy speculated that this woman might originate from our evehtual destination, Horselberg, where we arrived shortly thereafter. Set down in the ornamental gardens at the base of Venusberg (as it's more generally known) we finally located in amongst the phallic topiaries an exquisite alabaster archway decorated with erotic figures, leading to a tunnel of enormous moths with wings as rich as oriental rugs. Finally we emerged into the kingdom underneath the hill ruled by Queen Venus (named, presumably, after the Goddess), who welcomed us most pleasantly. The things we saw in those next days! In our palace boudoir were depictions by a rogue named Dorat of a Marquis, his young mistress and her poodle that were simply filthy, however much Fanny admired them. I much preferred to witness how Queen Venus makes her unicorn Adolphe sing each morning, after which we shared her customary royal breakfast. Delicately flavoured, something like an almond custard, it apparently works wonders for the skin."

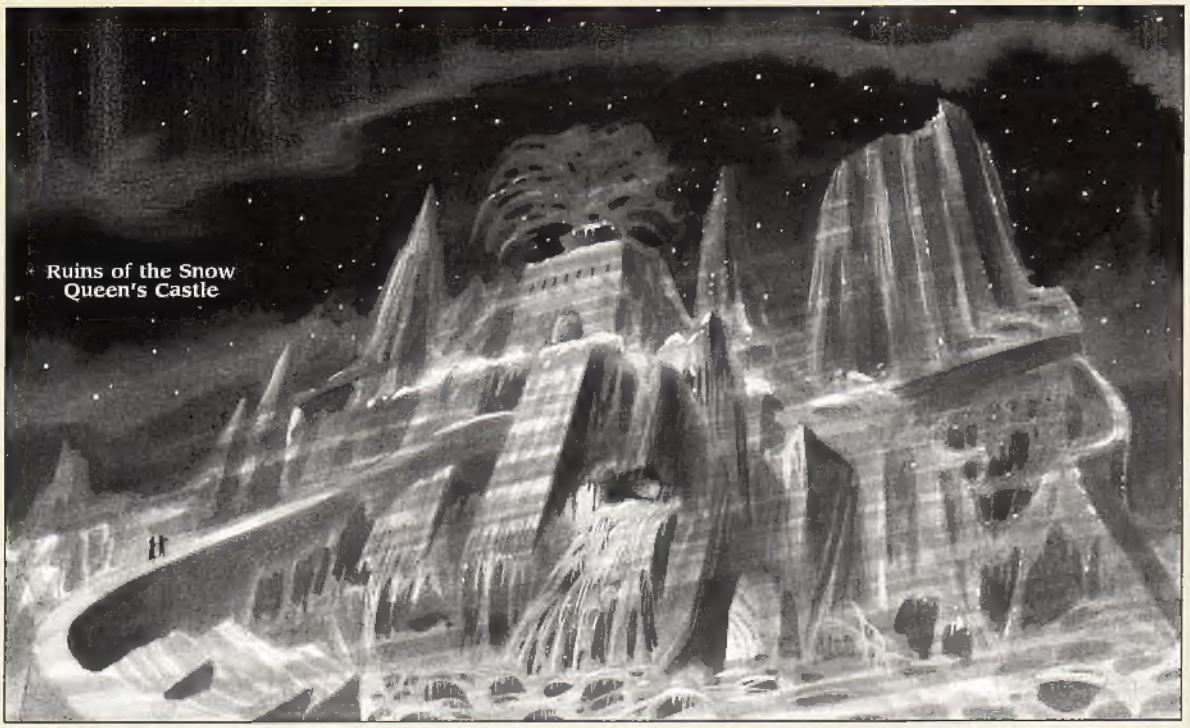
Just west of Venusberg on the Swiss border, we find the remarkable city of holes, Cittabella, and the nearby Nexdorea, where debutantes are reared to become Queens. Descriptive catalogues are circulated in nearby bachelor kingdoms, and Nexdorea subsequently provides Queens for most of Europe's small, obscure kingdoms and principalities. Northwest lies the deserted Palace of Prince Prospero, no relative to our Duke of Milan, with its seven different-coloured chambers, that was devastated by an outbreak of the Red Death in the 16th century. Continuing northwest we pass the troubling police-state of Meccania upon the Franco-German border and come to Micromona, where Marguerite Blakeney's narrative resumes.

"Males being barred from Micromona, Percy left us at the border and went on to nearby Silling Castle (owned by some nobles saved by Percy from the guillotine), where we would join him later. This was some weeks, so blissful was my time with Fanny there in Micromona, where girls are queens while boys are slaves. The Micromonan ladies all believe that they are angels and refuse contamination by the male sex. Thus their friendships are with other women, and we did not want for sweet attentions. Offspring are reportedly produced by shaking branches on a tree 'that grew in Paradise,' but actually by a method of insemination such as farmers use with animals, this accomplished in a scented grove of saplings, with the shaking of the trees depending on the vigour of its application. The sight is truly heavenly.

"At last we bade farewell to Micromona, heading on to Silling. Percy, looking shaken, bags already packed, met us outside and told us we should journey on immediately rather than suffer the vile hospitalities within, cruel sexual games played by aristocrats over the 120 days between November 1st and February 28th. Sickened, he had regretted having saved his hosts from execution, and suggested we should head on to Cockaigne, sometimes known as Cuccagna. This was rather a mixed blessing. Idleness is thought a virtue, so we could stay in bed However, since foods grow like flowers there, with homes made from confections, Fanny and I had trouble keeping trim, and thought we'd soon be ordering underthings from Papafiguiera. On our last day we visited a builders that exported houses made of food (cottages of gingerbread and such) to other parts of Germany. Terribly interesting."

Also in Germany is Mummelsee, a supernatural lake providing entrance to the subterranean realm of Centrum Terrae, miles beneath the surface. Or perhaps a trip to Nuremberg might be in order. Here, in Presidential antechambers, is a curious wardrobe granting access to the otherworldly "Kingdom of the Dolls." It was from this strange realm, or areas adjacent, that an apple pip was taken and used to grow the privately kept tree within Kew Gardens mentioned in our last installment. Whether this tree will provide wood for a similar wardrobe is as yet uncertain.

In the Rhine Valley past Cologne, we find the subterranean haunt of vagrants known as Under River, and, nearby, a ruined mansion called the Black House, both locations famous only in the psychiatric history of a violet-eyed young derelict who turned up in 1907, out of nowhere. Alienists were fascinated by the detail of the man's delusions, which concerned a sprawling castle to which he was heir, its architecture and its rituals described so vividly that many still believe his "Castle Gormenghast" exists, although no trace was ever found. Northward lies Auenthal, home of author Maria Wuz, who wrote books with titles taken from more famous works, next suing those who'd written the originals for plagiarism. Pierre Menard, second to chronicle the history of Don Quixote, was influenced by Wuz, with Wuz's



Ruins of the Snow Queen's Castle

Canterbury Tales amongst his favourites. Still further north is Berlin, near the Falun Fault, with hellish open-pit mines half a mile long that were until 1819 thought to be the entrance to a hidden kingdom. Travellers reported petrified monstrosities, visions of heaven, and metallic plants grown from transparent earth. However, in 1905, exhaustive tests revealed this paradise was caused by noxious gasses in the pit's depths.

Continuing northwest we pass the hollow willow leading to the underground realm of the Regentrude, a woman with the wearying responsibility of managing the rain. Next we reach Hamburg and the quarter called Sainte Beregonne, only accessible via a thin alleyway between two businesses on Mohlenstrasse. The timeless nature of Sainte Beregonne and its air of abandonment originate in a dimension called the Great Beyond, believed to own the quarter. Further east is Auersperg Castle, gothic home of the notorious 19th-century black magician Axel Auersperg, while off the Baltic coast are the Ear Islands, where live the Auriti, simple fishermen whose ears are large enough to cover their whole bodies, and sharp enough to hear fish shoaling far below the waves. Westward in Belgium, in a valley outside Brussels, are colonies collectively referred to as Harmonia, communitarian environments where all repression is forbidden, making the retreat a favourite of the Blakeneys and Miss Hill. Marguerite Blakeney's journal states, "Harmonia is the most tolerant place, although I wish the local children were not quite so unrestrained. In regiments known as 'Small Orders' they dress as hussars and ride about making a frightful row with bells and cymbals." On the Dutch border is the independent land of Gynographia, where men dominate women and which Percy Blakeney described as "not as much fun as I'd hoped." Nearby in Holland is the sleepy hamlet of Vondervotteimittis, whose carpenters carve only clocks or cabbages. The area's one incident of interest occurred during 1845, when a mysterious stranger caused the village clock to strike thirteen, precipitating an uproarious sequence of events during which furniture became ambulatory while pets and livestock ran amok in the streets.

Just off the coast of Holland is the island Laiquihire, reportedly the home of unseen deities, but we must travel northward past the Mer-King's underwater realm near Denmark to the marvels found in Scandinavia and beyond. In northeast Greenland stand the hills known as the Devil's Teeth, reachable by a natural basalt bridge. Tunnels lead to a carved mammoth, beyond which lay Erikraudebyg, a Viking colony founded in the 10th century by Erik the Red, famed for anachronistic fauna such as a two-horned rhinoceros believed to have been extinct since the Pliocene. Leaving Greenland behind we come to Iceland and its neighbouring islands, which include Estotiland whose folk are skilled in every science save that of navigation, and Drogio, further south, where ritual cannibalism is still practiced in the confines of exquisitely jewelled temples. On the Icelandic mainland we discover the extinct volcano Hekla, with a chasm at its foot where ghosts of drowned men will traditionally appear upon their day of drowning. Other strange nearby phenomena include a form of fire that fails to ignite tinder, and a form of water that will burn like wood, such stories circulated since the 16th century. Westward lies the extinct volcano Snaefells Jokull, which in 1863 was used by Hamburg's famed Professor Lidenbrock to enter the vast realm discovered by the 16th-century Icelandic scholar, Arne Saknussemm. Some of this underground land lies beneath the north of Scotland, and may be connected with Coal City, Roman State and Vril-ya country, mentioned in our previous installment.

East lies the Norwegian coast and Daland's Village, the only known port where the famous Flying Dutchman was allowed to land, one day each seven years. Nearby, in mountains outside Bergen, a crevasse leads to another tangle of sub-surface realms, such as Nazar, discovered by Norwegian traveller Nicholas Klim during the 1730s. He reported regions ruled by women, educated apes, or walking trees and even places where the populace were half musical instrument. Nazar has links with caves in central Norway's Dovre Fjell mountains, where trolls have been seen as recently as the late 19th century. Westwards, beneath the ocean between the United States and Norway, is the undersea realm Capillaria, inhabited by lovely women with translucent skin, known as Oihas. As with submarine worlds mentioned earlier, Capillaria may be an outpost of the Streaming Kingdom, far beneath the English Channel.

Passing on through Sweden, formerly Cimmeria, we reach northern Finland, where we find the stunning ruins of the Snow Queen's Castle, immense ice-halls looming empty and severe beneath the Northern Lights. Southwards, at Finland's tip, are friendlier places such as

Moominvalley, Daddy Jones' Kingdom and the Lonely Island, all inhabited by an unusually pacifistic breed of troll, perhaps a breakaway strain from the trolls of Dovre Fjell, retaining none of its Norwegian cousin's more alarming attributes. On Lonely Island there exists a breed of small and tube-like animal known as the Hattifattener, which, while mute and enigmatic, is reported to be very nourishing when boiled, much like a larger form of macaroni noodle. From the north we move to the last leg of our unusual European odyssey, being the dark lands of eastern Europe, visited by Wilhelmina Murray and a youthful male friend during 1912. Miss Murray and her paramour travelled by coach from Poland to the Balkans, though apparently in an extreme state of anxiety that caused her journal entries to be somewhat incomplete and hurried.

"We passed Klopstokia, a remarkable small country full of athletes on the eastern Polish border, and then circumnavigated hurriedly the tiny and yet somehow monstrous kingdom seized by the horrendous King Ubu the First in 1896. Just west of this we saw the distant outline of Klepsydra Sanatorium, where Dr. Gotard's time-reversal theories recently made news. A. thought that we should visit this to check for correspondences with the rejuvenating fountain in Ayesha's kingdom, but the sooner we are past this doleful countryside the better I shall feel. Our carriage took us through the City of the Happy Prince, where I had thought to find some cheer, but could have scarcely been more wrong. It is a run-down place with a neglected Jewish quarter, its sole monument an empty plinth in the town square where formerly there stood the statue of the Happy Prince himself. Its gems and gilt picked from it by a bird in the late 19th century, it looked so wretched that the City councillors had it removed. Apparently they have, as yet, found nothing more uplifting that might take its place.

"We crossed Czechoslovakia's border not long after midnight on our trip's third day. From Strelsau, capital of Ruritania (a kingdom seventy miles east of Dresden) we were sent west to the Ruritanian country town of Zenda, with its famous castle, where we found a coach-inn for the night. A. wanted to have marital relations, but I'm far too nervous about our eventual destination to relax and told him so, which led to moody silences the following morning heading south to Lutha, a small landlocked country nestling between the borderlines of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Along the way we passed a frightening edifice known only as 'The Castle,' then through a nearby valley where there's said to be a penal settlement, although we didn't see it. Soon the valley led into Wolf's Glen, where local legend states that sportsmen may buy seven magic bullets, the cost being naught but their immortal soul. Lutha, when we reached it, seemed a pleasant place, but there are local rumours that concern Prince Peter, Lutha's regent, who apparently declared the country's rightful royal heir Prince Leopold to be insane, incarcerating him within Blentz fortress, which we saw, and which looked absolutely horrid.

"From Lutha we drove west to Kravna on Czechoslovakia's eastern border, where I should have liked to visit the still-standing Tower of Suleiman. However, prior to reaching Kravna, the road bent due South, taking us through the independent countries of Sylvania and Freedonia and into northern Hungary. Dear Lord, this appalling place. It all comes back to me with such tremendous force. I only hope that I do not break down, or at least not when A. is present. At last we reached the castle high in the Carpathians where He lived once, or carried out those functions which to Him were the equivalent of living. I still cannot bring myself to write His name, despite the fact that it all happened more than fifteen years ago. What a ridiculous, weak thing I am.

"We visited the ruins by daylight, A. insisting that we take revolvers, though I told him these would be no use at all, and that we'd best take sharpened walking-canes instead. The castle was a husk, its rotting

"The Castle," near Lutha

halls, once sumptuous, now the retreat of bats, ancestral portraits made anonymous by guano. In the crypt the stone sarcophagi were all in disarray, but empty. What was I expecting? Did I fear (or hope?) that He'd still be alive, or that His cold-fleshed concubines would still reside here, and have news of Him? He's dead. He died out on the ice, that dreadful, beautiful old man. He only pours like fog beneath the door-frame in your dreams, you stupid woman.

"The one disquieting thing that we discovered was a sheaf of mildewed letters written to the former occupant by persons from a Transylvanian city east of Belgrade. These, I hope, were writ in rust-brown ink, though the content, with its cheerful reminiscences of awful acts performed on earlier visits, suggests otherwise. It struck me that although this castle's owner may be dead, his kind might still exist nearby, and thus we headed on for Transylvania, to put my mind at rest. In Transylvania we passed the ruins of Castle Karpathenburg, profitably haunted by an operatic ghost until, if I remember the newspaper article correctly, this was exposed as an ingenious hoax in 1892, its perpetrator blowing both his castle and himself to smithereens in what would seem to have been terrible chagrin.

"Continuing, we travelled onward through the most astonishingly dismal town I've ever seen, this being called the City of Dreadful Night. Surrounding mountains mean that sunlight never falls here, and indeed, though we passed through it during afternoon, it was pitch dark. The appropriately-named River of Suicides winds round the city, where the sleepless, tragic population shuffle soundlessly through ghastly lamp-lit streets. Above the town's main palace was the statue of a woman with spread wings and deep, grief-stricken eyes. Our driver told us this was Melencolia, the city's patron goddess, and even a glimpse of her left us both thoroughly depressed. We travelled on until we reached the outskirts of the place named in the letters we'd discovered at the castle, the awful vampire city of Selene.

"The buildings, all exquisitely adorned with decorations that seemed Indian or Chinese, were immaculate but wreathed in a thick atmosphere of terror, which A. said that he felt also. Naturally, we made our visit by the light of morning and so found the eerie streets deserted, though not, I imagine, uninhabited. Almost every house-front bore the proud crest of some noble blood-imbibing lineage or other, with embossed in silver, gold or black, the family name. Bathory. Yorga. I even fancied I caught sight of the name Hapsburg, though in this I surely was mistaken.

"I'd been right. They were there in their hundreds, but what could we do? The two of us could hardly work our way around the city spearing monsters before nightfall, even if we'd had the nerve for it, which I am not sure that we did. The best we could resolve was to return here at some future date, preferably with weaponry and reinforcements, to eradicate the dreadful parody of life which we could smell (the same smell He had, but much worse) behind the decorated shutters of Selene.

"We left that silent and nightmarish place behind us, some time before nightfall, and crossed into the Balkan territories, where next day we found a pleasant inn quite near Evarchia on the Black Sea. The sublime Evarchian 'gaudy bird' seems to be common hereabouts, and we were woken by its song upon the morning following. I am much calmed having put Transylvania behind us, and the two of us spent some few hours in bed before we rose.

"We were thus in a wholly better mood when we made an excursion to the coast, then hired a boat to carry us to Leuke, a small island that the God Poseidon was alleged to have created as a place to bury the great hero Achilles, whose temple is still standing. The shrine, unattended save for huge white birds who mourn above the hero's grave and bathe his temple walls with water shaken from their wings, was beautiful by the light of the setting sun. This is the place, it's said, where Helen married Achilles while Thetis and Poseidon served as witnesses, and also where A. and myself were moved to conjugal activity, unwitnessed save by the enormous sail-white shapes that circled keening overhead, like dumbstruck angels."

At this point we conclude our tour of Europe, but advise the reader to refer to the next chapter of our New Traveller's Almanac, in which we focus our attentions upon the Americas and their surrounding islands.

The City of Dreadful Night

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"...Edward Hyde, alone, in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil."
— Henry Jekyll, 1886